

H.B. PATRIARCH THEOFILOS III HOLDS A SERIES OF MEETINGS IN WASHINGTON, D.C. DISCUSSING THE MATTER OF JAFFA GATE

H.B. our Father and Patriarch Theophilos III, held a series of meetings with American politicians, religious and civil society leaders to raise awareness about the threats facing the Christian presence in the Holy Land, and particularly in Jerusalem. These risks have increased along with the increased probability of settlers taking over the properties of Jaffa Gate after the Supreme Court's wrongful decision to allow Ateret Cohanim organisation to do so.

H.B. Patriarch Theophilos III led a delegation from the Holy Land representing the three Church families (Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant families) to promote the concept of the Christian unity and the joint Christian action in the face of the challenges that beset the Christian presence in the Holy Land, while working at the same time to enrich the interaction between the Churches of Jerusalem and the decision-makers in the US.

H.B. Theophilos III and the accompanying delegation participated in a conference of foreign ministers to promote religious freedom, which was held in Washington, D.C. with the participation of dozens of foreign ministers from all over the world. H.B. met with ministers and various political personalities, briefing them on the situation of Jerusalemites, and the state of the Christian and Muslim holy sites which suffer from violations at the hands of radical settler groups. Our Father and Patriarch also briefed the ministers on the latest developments regarding the properties of Jaffa Gate, urging them to encourage the Israeli government

to conclude this file that poses an existential threat to Christians in Jerusalem.

H.B. Patriarch of Jerusalem, also met with officials in the White House, the State Department, the International Bureau of Religious Freedom, the USAID, and a large number of members of the Senate and House of Representatives, where he presented the importance of the Jaffa Gate properties and the impact they hold on the Christian presence in Jerusalem, and for the Christian pilgrims as well; for it being the main entrance to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre for hundreds of years, and also the main entrance to the Christian Quarter, the monasteries, and ecclesiastical institutions in general, as well. Patriarch Theophilos warned that the seizure by settlers of the Jaffa Gate properties will have catastrophic consequences for the Christians all over the world and not only Christians of the Holy Land.

Among the meetings of Patriarch Theophilos III in Washington, D.C. and the accompanying delegation, they met with leaders of civil society, specifically with heads of universities, to put them in the picture of what is going on in Jerusalem. Our Patriarch asked them to cooperate with the our Patriarchate of Jerusalem and the other Churches in Jerusalem; to raise awareness within the American society about the dangers threatening the Christian presence and the attacks on the Christian and Islamic holy places.

From Secretariat-General